



Port Security Information Bulletin 02-04

Guidelines For Vessel Masters To Prevent Deserters and Absconders

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Your cooperation is requested to prevent absconders and deserters from your vessel. If a crewmember deserts or absconds, the vessel and its owners, operators, master, and agent could face civil penalties. To help avoid these actions, the following precautions should be taken:

- (1) If you suspect anyone in the crew desires to desert or abscond, make the immigrations officer aware of this.
- (2) Maintain a gangway watch who logs all persons arriving and departing the vessel and who ensures detained on board crewmembers do not leave the vessel. Staff this watch with persons who will not desert or abscond, or help others to do so.
- (3) Ensure your vessel checks the identity of all departing persons, including those departing via a launch service, to ensure they have a valid shore pass.
- (4) If your vessel will be in port for more than twelve hours, perform a twice-daily muster of your crew to ensure detained on board crewmembers have not departed the vessel, and log the results of this muster.
- (5) Muster your crew, including those crewmembers given shore passes, prior to ordering a pilot and departure to ensure everyone is on board the vessel.
- (6) If required by my office in a separate order, report the results of this final muster to the Marine Safety Office at (361) 888-3163, or after normal business hours at (361) 533-3006.
- (7) Immediately notify Customs and Border Protection at (361) 888-3326 as soon as you are aware a detained on board crewmember is missing or a crewmember with a shore pass will not be returning. Do not delay this notification for any reason. For crewmembers missing from vessels in the Port of Brownsville, notify Customs and Border Protection at (956) 547-3180.

While these preventive measures are voluntary, follow them diligently. The Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection may conduct audits of your vessel to ensure all detained on board crewmembers are present. We may also board vessels to ensure the entire crew is present prior to its departure, and will attempt to limit the impacts of these audits as much as possible. Please relay questions and concerns to the Marine Safety Office Security Section Chief, LT T.J. Hopkins, at (361) 888-3162 ext 401.

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